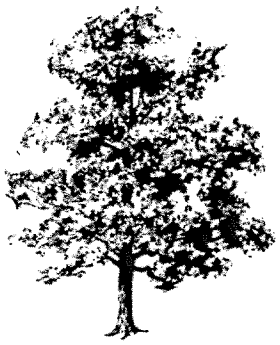
Public Comment

#3

LATE DIST

WE Watch, P.O Box 830, Solvang CA93464



January 23, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: WE Watch, Nancy Emerson, President
RE: Proposed Hemp Ordinance

WE Watch, a Santa Ynez Valley focused land use and environmental organization, having supported the priority for development of a Hemp Ordinance, was relieved to see it on the agenda. But we are having second thoughts after reading the ordinance. It is not just another agricultural crop because hemp has all the problems, except federal legality, that resulted in a land use ordinance separating cannabis from agricultural crops. We have a draft separate ordinance but it does not provide land use regulations stating where this cannabis-like plant can and cannot be grown or how odor will be controlled. For residents and other agriculturists, all it does is increase the unresolved problems with the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance.

San Luis Obispo County adopted an ordinance in 2020 that prohibited cultivation completely in the Edna Valley. In the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, it limited outdoor cultivation to sites of 400 acres or more, required them to be one mile or more from urbanized areas, 2,000 feet from all adjacent property lines, and prohibited hoop houses.

What is needed for the tourist and wine industry dependent Santa Ynez Valley is inclusion in a Hemp Land Use Ordinance of regulations similar to those in San Luis Obispo County. Hemp cultivation can evidently cause problems for cannabis cultivation, too. So, given the above problems for all tourists, residents and agriculturists, it would be wise to hold firmly to the cannabis cap and limit or ban hemp cultivation.

Specific to the Hemp Ordinance: the proposed regulation system – Inspection, Sampling, Plant Destruction – with implementation challenges and unknown costs for both the hemp farmers and the regulators is daunting. Are others using this system and, if so, who and how is it working?